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Zarathushtra entre l'Inde et l'Iran

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Jean Kellens à l'occasion de son 65^e anniversaire

ed. par
Éric Pirart et Xavier Tremblay

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Syntax and etymology of Avestan *bā* and *bōiṭ*

Michiel de Vaan

1. The honorand of this volume has always paid due attention to the syntax of Avestan, showing that a more profound knowledge of syntactic details yields a better insight into the prehistory of verbal and nominal morphology (Kellens 1974, 1984), but may also give important clues to the history of the composition and transmission of the Avesta as a literary text (Kellens 1996, 2004, 2006: 274-288). A specific area which suffers from a lack of attention – especially when compared with recent contributions in the field of Vedic Sanskrit – seems to me that of pronouns and particles. While the OAv. evidence was studied by Pirart in Kellens-Pirart 1988-91, volume II, the YAv. evidence has not been studied extensively since Caland's 1891 study of pronominal syntax. The present contribution will try to extend our knowledge in this field.

We find in Young Avestan three different particles with initial *b-*: *bā* (also attested once in Old Avestan), *bāḍa* and *bōiṭ*. They are often mentioned in one breath because they share their initial consonant, their apparent function of modifying or commenting on the pragmatics of an utterance, and their predominant placement after the first word in the sentence, which Wackernagel (1892) has recognized to be the preferred position for unstressed particles and pronouns in PIE. In fact, *bā* and *bōiṭ* are always found in the second position of a clause, whereas *bāḍa* can also occur at other positions. In this paper I will focus on *bā* and *bōiṭ*; the analysis of *bāḍa* will follow on a different occasion.

In his dictionary, Bartholomae (1904: 912, 953, 962) provides the following translation and interpretation of the two particles in question:

bā: “Particle of affirmation and accentuation, after the first word (or stress) of the sentence.” Bartholomae distinguishes four positions: after a verb, a noun, a pronoun, and after adverbs and others.

bōiṭ: “Particle of affirmation”, occurring after the first word in the clause: after a noun in V 13.22 and Ny 3.11, after a pronoun in Yt 5.89.

Firstly, it should be investigated whether the formal difference between *bā* and *bōiṭ* is correlated with a tangible difference in meaning. Secondly, the notions of affirmation and accentuation invoked by Bartholomae are rather vague, and invite a closer investigation in terms of information structure. It may be useful to give a short definition of the main terminology which I will be using (cf. Brown-Yule 1983: 137, 153-189, 192f., Klein 1985 I: 16ff.). On the level of information status, I define as *topic* the main character, object or idea of a text (this is also often called *theme*), as *comment* further information provided about the topic (also called *rheme*), and as *focus* the prominent part of a sentence. Obviously, in a corpus transmitted only in writing and without any information on sentence intonation, it will often be difficult to clearly

distinguish between these entities. To indicate the relations between different parts of speech I distinguish between *introductory* reference (which introduces a referent), *anaphoric* reference (which looks back in the text for its interpretation), and *cataphoric* reference (which looks forward in the text for its interpretation).

2. All instances of *bā* and *bōiṭ* are found in direct speech. Since large parts of the YAv. corpus consist of dialogues and invocations, this is not very surprising, but we can be more specific: in the overwhelming majority of cases, *bā* and *bōiṭ* occur in the answer to a previous question.

2.1 YAv. *bā* mainly occurs in introductory nominal and adverbial sentences (often called *cleft* sentences) of the type ‘It is he (...), who’ or ‘It is so (...), as’ which start an answer. The particle *bā* provides a signal which says that a specification of the answer will follow immediately afterward. Thus, it is used for cataphoric reference to a following comment. The focus status of the initial pronoun or adverb is due to its clause-initial position, not to *bā*; thus, I find no affirmative or emphatic function of *bā*.

The clearest examples occur in the questioning dialogues (*frašna*) between Ahura Mazda and Zarathustra on the principles and definitions of the religion. This text genre makes up several parts of the Videvdad, and is also found in some of the fragmentarily transmitted YAv. texts. In V 9.51-52, the question *ciš* is answered by means of *hō bā ... yō*:

ciš hāu ās ahura mazda yō mē asadaiiaṭ fradaθəm apa.barat varədaθəm apa.barat yaskəm upa.barat mahrkəm upa.barat

āat mraoṭ ahurō mazdā: hō bā aēšō ās ašāum zaraθuštra ašəmaoyō anašauua yō aētahmi aṅṅhuuō yaṭ astuuaiṅti paiti.hiṅcaiti ā dim nōiṭ apiuuatāite daēnaiiā māzdaiiasnōiš yaozdāθriiāṭ haca

‘Who is he, o Ahura Mazda, who takes away my visible prosperity and increase, who brings sickness and death?’

Ahura Mazda said: he is the one, o righteous Zarathustra, the unrighteous heretic who in this material world makes a libation, although he is not familiar with the Mazdayasnean religion as regards the office of purificator.’

In V 5.15 and 5.16, Zarathustra asks Ahura Mazda seven questions about his dealings with the water in connection with dead bodies. In V 5.17 and 5.18, Ahura Mazda gives seven affirmative answers, which are preceded by an introductory clause containing *bā*:

āat mraoṭ ahurō mazdā: aēuuatha bā zaraθuštra yaθa tūm ərəzuuō vašāṅhe

‘Ahura Mazda said: it is entirely so, Zarathustra, as you correctly say.’

In V 3.1, the question *kuua* ‘where?’ is answered by Ahura Mazda with *yaṭ bā paiti nā ašauua fraiiaṭ* ‘when a righteous man goes forward’:

dātarə gaēthanəm astuuaitinəm ašāum: kuua paoirīm aṃhā zəməō šāišəm?
āaṭ mraoṭ ahurō mazdā: yaṭ bā paiti nā ašauua fraiiat spitama zaraθuštra ... vaca
framrū

‘O creator of the material world, righteous one! Where on this earth is it most agreeable, first of all?’

Ahura Mazda said: when a righteous man goes forward, o Spitama Zarathustra, ..., saying aloud the words.’

In V 3.2 through V 3.35, we find thirteen other instances of an answer starting in *yaṭ bā paiti*; if the answer has a different word than *paiti* after *yaṭ*, or if the answer does not begin with *yaṭ*, no *bā* is inserted. Now *paiti* only makes semantic sense in V 3.1, where we can read a compound verb in tmesis *paiti ... fraiiat*. In the other clauses, *paiti* must have been copied from V 3.1; it can be omitted without changing the meaning of the text. Since *yaṭ* ‘when’ can also be followed directly by a genitive (in V 3.7, 3.15), it may be the case that *bā* originally stood only in V 3.1, and was transposed to the other answers at a later stage of the text transmission. This would imply that only the first answer to the question originally contained *bā*.

In V 5.22, Zarathustra asks Ahura Mazda how much the Zarathustrian creed is better than others. The answer is introduced by *mānaiiən* ‘just like, as if’ which introduces a comparison, followed by *bā*:

āaṭ mraoṭ ahurō mazdā: mānaiiən bā spitama zaraθuštra aētəm dātəm yim
vīdōiīum zaraθuštri upairi aniiāiš srauuiāiš masanaca vanḥanaca sraiiānaca yaθa zraiiō
vourukašəm upairi aniiā āpō

‘Ahura Mazda said: this daeva-hostile Zarathustrian Law, o Spitama Zarathustra, is similar in surpassing the other creeds in greatness and goodness and beauty as (is) the lake Vourukasha in surpassing the other waters.’

The same *mānaiiən bā spitama zaraθuštra* introduces the comparisons in V 5.24 (2x) and 5.25, and is also found in V 7.55 and V 9.46, 9.48, where Ahura Mazda is equally responding to Zarathustra. On the whole, the form *mānaiiən* is only found in the two YAv. constructions *mānaiiən ahe yaθa* and *mānaiiən bā* (without *yaθa*). I adopt the analysis proposed by Humbach (1969: 71-73) that *mānaiiən* represents an adverbial acc.sg.n. of a pres.part.act. **mānaiiant-* ‘resembling’. Hoffmann (1975 I: 264f.) has accepted this solution and stipulated that **mānaiia-* can be interpreted as a causative stem ‘denken lassen an’ to *man-* ‘to think’. It is true that *mānaiiən* would also allow for an analysis as a 3pl.inj.act. or a 3pl.opt.act., compare V *upa.mānaiiən* ‘they should wait’. Yet the presence of the genitival object *ahe* in *mānaiiən ahe yaθa* suggests a nominal form which can take an object in the genitive. Another argument against taking *mānaiiən* as an optative is the fact that the presence of an optative in an answer otherwise excludes the use of *bā*, as we will see in section 2.2.

I refrain from discussing the other passages with a structure similar to the preceding examples, in which Ahura Mazda is answering and uses *bā* in the first sentence. A survey of the core elements of these dialogues must suffice:

V 7.79 *hō bā aṅhaṭ ašāum zaraθuštra yō ...*

‘It will be he, o righteous Zarathustra, who ...’

V 17.2 *hāu bā ašāum zaraθuštra yō ...*

‘It is he, o righteous Zarathustra, who ...’

V 18.62 *jahi bā ašāum zaraθuštra yō ...*

‘The whore, o righteous Zarathustra, who ...’

H 1.7 *hāu bā ašāum zaraθuštra yaṃ bā nā fraṅ^vharəta hauruuat̥biia amərətāt̥biia ašəm staoiti*

‘It is that (prayer), o righteous Zarathustra, which a man when eating prays as Aša to health and immortality.’ The second *bā* is unique in this syntactic position and probably persevered from the first clause.

H 2.20 *auuaða bā ašāum zaraθuštra asne kamərəðāt̥ haṇduuaraiti*

‘There, o righteous Zarathustra, it runs up and down close to his head.’

Yt 12.2 *azəm bā tē taṭ framrauūāni ərəzuuō ašāum spitama maθrō spəntō yō aš.x^varənā*

‘I will tell it to you as it is, o righteous Spitama: the holy word, which has big splendour.’

P 26 *kaṭ tē asti ahunahe vairiiehe haiθīm?*

manō bā vohu zaraθuštra aḍaoiiamnəm

‘What is the essence of thy Ahuna Vairya? (A) good mind, o Spitama Zarathustra, infallible.’ (Jamaspasa-Humbach 1971 I: 42f.)

A slight deviation in word order is found four times between V 18.34 and 18.54, in the *frašna* between Sraosha and the Druj. In these passages, the answer which the Druj gives is preceded by a vocative, whereas the vocative follows *bā* in the passages we have seen so far:

āaṭ hē hā paiti.dauuata yā daēuui druxš:

sraoša ašiiia huraoða hō bā mē aētaēšəm aršnaṃ paoiriiō (V 18.34)

‘She answered him, the daevic Druj:

o believing, well-built Sraosha, he is for me the first of those men.’

In Yt 15.43, a litany starts which lists many names of Vayu in the first person singular with *nəma ahmi* ‘my name is’. Although Yt 15.43 is not preceded by a question, the text addresses the Zarathustra in the vocative, as if answering the prophet’s question ‘What is your name, o Vayu?’. The word *bā* only occurs in the first two lines of Yt 15.43, never to reappear in all the remaining 50 occurrences of *nəma ahmi* until Yt 15.52. Hence, it may be argued that *bā* here has the same cataphoric function as elsewhere:

vaiiuš bā naṃa ahmi ašāum
zaraθuštra: auuaṭ vaiiuš bā naṃa
ahmi yaṭ uua dāma vaiiemi

‘Vayu is my name, o righteous Zarathustra:

Vayu is my name for that reason, that I blow (through) both creations.’ (For the translation of *vaiiemi* as ‘I blow’ see Panaino 2002: 73 after Kellens 1984: 89, 138).

2.2 The use of *bā* can be further determined by comparing the more numerous dialogues in which it does not occur. I have studied the passages in which statements and answers are introduced by means of *mraomi* ‘I say’, *mraoṭ* ‘(s)he said’, *aoxta* ‘said’, *aojana-* ‘saying’ and *dauuata* ‘spoke (as a daeva)’. The particle *bā* turns out to be absent from an answer:

— which starts in *yezi* ‘if’ (Yt 4.4, V 5.28);

— which contains an optative;

— which contains a negation;

— which contains *zī* ‘for, because’ (V 13.41);

— which forms the immediate answer to a question with *ka-*, *ci-* ‘who, which?’, *cuuaṭ* ‘how much?’, *kuua* ‘where?’, *kuθa* ‘whereto?’, unless the initial answer is commented on by means of a relative clause in *ya-*.

The last type is the most frequent type of *bā*-less answer. It occurs many times, especially in the Videvdad. Here are a few examples of its usage.

In Yašt 14.1, Zarathustra asks:

kō asti mainiiuuanam yazatanam zaiiōtāmō?

āaṭ mraoṭ ahurō mazdā: vərəθraγnō ahuraδātō spitama zaraθuštra

‘Who is the best armed of the spiritual deities? Ahura Mazda said: (It is) ahura-created Vərəθraγna, o Spitama Zarathustra.’

Videvdad 3.36:

dātara gaēθanaṃ astuuaitinaṃ ašāum, yaṭ ... kā hē asti ciθa?

āaṭ mraoṭ ahurō mazdā: pañca sata upāzananaṃ upāzōiṭ aspahe aštraia

‘O righteous creator of the material world, when ..., what is the penalty for that? Ahura Mazda said: five hundred lashes he must be given with the horsewhip.’

V 6.44-45:

kuua naram iristanam tanūm barāma ahura mazda kuua nidaθāma?

āaṭ mraoṭ ahurō mazdā: barəzištaēšuuaca paiti gātušuu

‘Where shall we carry the corpse of dead men, o Ahura Mazda, where shall we put it down? Ahura Mazda said: on the highest places.’

V 13.17:

kuua asti spā pasuš.hauruuō dāitiīō.gātuš?

*āat mraoṭ ahurō mazdā: yō yūjiiastīm haca gaēθābiiō parāiti sraēšəmmō tāiīuš
vəhrkəmcā*

‘Where is the sheepdog in its rightful place? Ahura Mazda said: (with) who(m) goes a *yūjiiasti*- away from his household in order to chase thieves or a wolf.’

In semantic terms, these findings may be summarized in the following way. YAv. *bā* is lacking from an answer in two pragmatic contexts:

(1) If the answer is uncertain or negative, as shown by the use of *yezi*, the optative or a negation.

(2) If the answer is given by the very first word(s) of the sentence, such as a name (Yt 14.1), the height of a penalty (V 3.36), the place where something is to be done (V 6.44f.), or an explanatory relative clause (V 13.17). Probably, the explicitness of the answer bleeds the cataphoric function of *bā*.

As it turns out, the analysis of the absence of *bā* confirms our preliminary conclusions reached for the passages with *bā*: it signals that the answer is going to be further specified.

The only clear set of exceptions occurs in Videvdad 18. In V 18.36-37, Sraosha asks the Druj: *ciš aṅhā^ā asti uzuuarəzəm* ‘What is the atonement for this?’. The answer follows: *sraoša aṅiia huraoḍa aom aṅhe asti uzuuarəzəm yaṭ ...* ‘O believing, well-built Sraosha, this is the atonement for it, (viz.) that ...’. Similarly in V 18.43 and 18.49. Thus, although *aom aṅhe asti uzuuarəzəm yaṭ* resembles the structure of passages containing *bā*, the particle itself is absent. Note the contrast with *hō bā mē aētaēšqm aršnqm paoiriīō* in V 18.34ff.

A seeming exception is found in Yasna 9.1f., in the dialogue between Zarathustra and Haoma. In Y 9.1, Zarathustra asks *kō narə ahī* ‘Who, o man, are you?’. The answer follows in Y 9.2:

āat mē aēm paitiiaoxta haomō ašauua dūraošō:

azəm ahmi zaraθuštra haomō ašauua dūraošō

‘Then righteous, death-destroying Haoma answered me:

“I am, o Zarathustra, righteous, death-destroying Haoma.” (Josephson 1997: 43)

Kellens 2006: 276 has argued on metrical and compositional grounds that Y 9.1–2 originally contained a direct address by Haoma to Zarathustra, which was reworked during a later text redaction into a dialogue of the *frašna* type in order to append it smoothly to the remainder of Yasna 9. If Haoma’s speech in Y 9.2 was not originally an answer to a question, this could explain the absence of *bā*.

2.3 If a speech act is not an answer to an earlier question, it does not normally contain *bā*. A few exceptions occur in which *bā* features outside the answer to a question. Since it still refers cataphorically to a comment on an already mentioned topic, there is a close resemblance to the cataphoric function of *bā* observed in section 2.1.

In Yašt 5.77, *bā* refers forward to the clause in *yaṭ* which comments on the topic ‘words’:

*təm yazata vistauruš yō naotairiiqnō upa āpəm yaqm vītaṅhaitīm
arəžuxdāt paiti vacaṅhaṭ uiti vacēbiš aojanō:*

tā bā aša tā aršuxda arəduuī sūre anāhite yaṭ mē + auuaṭ daēuuaitiasnanqm nijatəm
‘To her sacrificed Vistauru, the Naotaryan, at the water Vitahvati, thus speaking in words the well-spoken word:

this is according to truth, these are truthful words, o beneficial strong Anahita, that I slew so many daeva-worshippers’ (For the translation of *arəduuī* as ‘beneficial’, see Oettinger 1983: 349f.)

In Yašt 17.5, the topic is *nəmō* ‘honour’. Again, *bā* points ahead to a comment introduced by *yaṭ*:

*haomaheca nəmō maθraheca ašaonaēca zaraθuštrahe:
aṭciṭ bā nəmō haomāi yaṭ vīspe anīie madāṅhō aēšma hacīnte xruuidruuō
āaṭ hō yō haomahe madō aša hacāite x’ aēpaiθe*

‘Praise to Haoma and to the Word and to righteous Zarathustra: praise to Haoma, for all other intoxications are accompanied by Aeshma who has a bloody club, but Haoma’s intoxication is accompanied by Order itself.’

In Yašt 17.7 and 17.14, the topic is *narō* ‘men’, while *yim* introduces the comment to which *bā* refers:

*tē narō xšaθra xšaiiēnte (...) yōi hacahi ašiš vaṅuhi:
ušta bā yim hacahi*

‘Those men rule the reigns (...), whom you accompany, o Good Ashi; Hail indeed whom you accompany’

In Yašt 3.2, *bā* appears to be referring to the comment on *vacō* ‘word’ which is introduced by *yaθa*:

āaṭ aoxta zaraθuštrō: mrūidi bā vacō arš. vacō ahura mazda yaθa tē aṅhən yaṭ ...

‘Zarathustra said: just speak the well-said word, o Ahura Mazda, as they were when ...’.

However, there is no clear syntactic connection between Yt 3.1 and Yt 3.2, and Wolff (1910: 161) notes about this passage that “Die §§ 1 und 2 sind unvollständig und konfus.” Hence, it is of limited value to us.

2.4 The connection between *bā* and direct speech is also confirmed by the only Old Avestan instance of *bā*, in the Yasna Haptañhāiti:

Y 35.5 *huxšaθrōtəmāi bā at xšaθrəm ahmaṭ hiiat aibī dadəmahicā cīsmahicā huuaṇmahicā hiiat mazdāi ahurāi ašāicā vahištāi*

‘Dem, der wahrlich die beste Herrschaft hat, bestimmen, übertragen und verschaffen wir die Herrschaft, soweit es an uns liegt: dem Weisen Herrn und der besten Wahrheit.’ (Narten 1986: 108).

As argued by Narten (1986: 94³¹, 95), the use of *at* in the second position of the clause places the first word *huxšaθrōtəmāi* in focus. The function of *bā* can again be interpreted as pointing ahead to the comment *hiiat mazdāi ahurāi ašāicā vahištāi* which follows further down.

3. We may now turn to the analysis of *bōiṭ*, attested only three times. In two passages, it appears in a dialogue, again in clause-second position. The main surface difference with *bā* is that *bōiṭ* does not occur in an introductory clause, but is an integral part of the answering sentence.

3.1 In V 13.20–23, a series of questions is put to Ahura Mazda about the degree of sinfulness of letting different kinds of dogs starve: *cuuat aētaēšəm šīiaoθnanəm āstāraiti* ‘to what extent are such deeds sinful?’. The answers in V 13.20 and 21 take the form *yaθa ... paiti tarō.piθβəm daiθiiāt* ‘As if he would refuse food to ...’. The answer in V 13.22 involves the particle *bōiṭ*:

āat mraoṭ ahurō mazdā:
*narəm bōiṭ iða ašauuanəm *jasəntəm*
ahmiia nmāne maṭ auuabiiō daxštābiiō
yaθa āθrauuua paiti tarō.piθβəm daiθiiāt

‘Ahura Mazda said: [as if] he would refuse food to a righteous man here who comes to his house with these characteristics like a priest.’

This usage resembles the use of *bā* in that the initial answer *narəm* is further commented on as *ašauuanəm* and *jasəntəm ahmiia nmāne*. A clear difference with the rules as established for *bā* is that in V 13.22, the verb *daiθiiāt* is in the optative. It may be significant that V 13.20–22 show an ascending degree of seriousness of the offence: in V 13.20, the measure of comparison is a ‘master of a smaller house’, in V 13.21 the ‘master of a medium-sized house’, whereas in V 13.22, the measure is a priest. It is conceivable that *bōiṭ* lends a climactic connotation to this third *narəm*.

In Yt 5.89, *bōiṭ* occurs in the second part of an address to Zarathustra by the goddess Anāhita:

ərəzuuō ašāum spitama θβqm daθaṭ ahurō mazdā
ratuš astuuaiθiiō gaēθaiiā maqm daθaṭ ahurō mazdā
nipātāra vīspaiiā ašaonō stōiš:
mana raiia x^varənaṅhaca pasuuasca staorāca
upairi zaqm vīcarəṅta mašiiāca bizəṅgra:
azəm bōiṭ tūm tā nipaiemi vīspa vohū mazdadāta ašaciθra
mānaiian ahe yaθa pasūm pasu.vastrəm

“Truely, o righteous Spitama, Ahura Mazda created you.

(You are) the Ratu of the material world. Ahura Mazda made me.

(We are) the guardians of the whole righteous creation.

On account of my wealth and splendour, small cattle and large cattle and the two-legged men go over the earth.

I, o strong one, protect all the good created by Ahura Mazda and sprung from Order, just like the cattle-fleece (protects) the cattle.”

The translation is adopted from Oettinger (1983: 95, 316-322), with the exception of *tum*. Oettinger (p. 320) mentions but does not follow a proposal by Karl Hoffmann that *tum* represents a vocative **tuuan* ‘strong one!’ to a stem *tuuan-* ‘able’ attested in V 3.33. In view of the presence of a vocative in most clauses containing the particle *bā*, it would indeed be attractive to assume a voc.sg. next to *bōiṭ* in Yt 5.89. Of course, Oettinger’s alternative solution of an adverb **tuuam* ‘strongly’ cannot be excluded. In terms of function, *bōiṭ* could be interpreted cataphorically, referring to the comment *nipaiemi* on the topic ‘I’ which occurs as *maqm* and *mana* in the preceding lines. Since ‘I’ is being talked about before, one might also attribute a climactic function to *bōiṭ* as we have hypothesized for V 13.22.

In Ny 3.11, a priest or worshipper is addressing the gods:

yazata pouru.x^varənaṅ^vha yazata pouru.baēšaza
ciθra vō buiīārəš masānā^ā ciθra vō zauuanō.suuō:
ciθrəm bōiṭ yūžəmcit^ṣ x^varənō yazəmnāi āpō dāiiata

‘O you deities, who have much splendour! O you deities, who have much medicine! May your greatnesses become apparent, (the greatnesses) of you who thrive by libations:

may you bestow apparent splendour, o waters, on the one who sacrifices [to you].’

(translation after Kellens 1974: 102f.)

If *bōiṭ* is again cataphoric, it must be linking *ciθrəm* to its head noun *x^varənō*, not to a whole sentence. The plural pronoun ‘you’ (enclitic *vō* in the second line) could be interpreted as the topic on which the final line comments. The climactic position of *ciθrəm* after the preceding mentionings of *ciθra* is obvious.

3.2 We may conclude that *bōiṭ* and *bā* have a very similar meaning and distribution. The main difference – as far as one can judge on the basis of only three examples – concerns the type of clauses in which they are found. While *bā* mainly occurs in introductory nominal and adverbial sentences of the type ‘it is he, who’ and ‘it is so, as’, *bōiṭ* is only attested after the object or subject of a full sentence; this sentence itself is the locus of a comment on the topic. Furthermore, there seems to be a climactic connotation to *bōiṭ*, or it prefers to be employed in climactic sentences; it is therefore tempting to translate it as ‘even’. Since the sense of a climax is absent from *bā*, it must lie in the addition *-iṭ*.

YAv. *bōiṭ* can therefore be explained as a compound particle consisting of *bā* plus PIE **id* ‘this’ [n.]. Whereas *bā* may reflect Indo-Iranian **b^ha*, **b^hā* or **b^haH*, *bōiṭ* may represent **b^ha-id* or **b^haH-id*; compare Av. *nōiṭ* ‘not’ < Indo-Iranian **na* + **id*, Vedic *néd* < **na id*. Vedic *id* adds emphasis to a preceding word, and it can strengthen an antithesis with earlier utterances. Hence, it is frequently translated as ‘even’, ‘indeed’ or ‘only’. Similarly, OAv. *iṭ* is attested with this function in combination with *-ca*: Y 39.3 *āṭ iθā yazamaidē vanhūścā iṭ van^hhīścā iṭ* ‘So verehren wir nun gerade die guten (Männer) und gerade die guten (Frauen)’ (Hoffmann 1975 II: 617, Narten 1986: 260). Merged into one word we find this combination in YAv. *cōiṭ* in Y 12.5 and 12.6: *aθā aθā cōiṭ* ‘so und gerade so’ (Hoffmann 1975 II: 616). Thus, the meaning of *bōiṭ* can be explained as a direct reflex of the cataphoric meaning of **b^ha(H)* combined with the emphasizing function of **id*.

4. Etymologically, *bā* and *bōiṭ* have mostly been derived from the PIE demonstrative particle or pronoun **b^ho/e*, as reflected in Old Church Slavic *bo* ‘for’, Lithuanian *bà* ‘really’, *bè* ‘if, whether’, *beñt* ‘at least’, Gothic *-ba-* ‘even’ < **b^ho*, cf. Bartholomae 1904: 912, Pokorny 1959: 113, Bader 1973: 53. The syntactic analysis of the Avestan data supports this hypothesis.

In Hittite, we find the sentence particle *-pat* < PIE **-b^hod* (Kloekhorst 2008: 652), which is defined by the Chicago Hittite Dictionary as an “enclitic particle of specification, limitation and identity”. The various English translations of *-pat* depend on the context: ‘the same’, ‘even’, ‘only’, etc. Its specifying and identifying function can be compared with the cataphoric value of YAv. *bā*. In addition, the Hittite and Cuneiform Luwian pronoun *apā-* ‘that (near you)’ and Lycian *ebe-* ‘this’ reflect Proto-Anatolian **Hobó-*, which was built from PIE demonstrative **h₁o-* + **b^ho-* (Kloekhorst 2008: 191). A similar formation is found in Germanic, viz. Gothic *ibai* ‘or?’, OHG *ibu*, OS I/Oc. *ef* ‘or, whether’ from **h₁e-b^ho-* (Lühr 1976: 91f.). Hence, both Germanic and Anatolian show **b^ho-* as a suffix to a deictic pronoun. If this construction was inherited from PIE, the Avestan combinations *hō bā* and *hāu bā*, with the Ir. pronoun **sa-* in front of the particle, might reflect the same syntactic feature inherited from PIE. If this is correct, it would help us understand why *bā* is preferably used in cleft sentences after pronouns. Its preference for answers to questions can then be explained as a secondary development, caused by the fact that cleft sentences in general occur more frequently in dialogue situations.

The exact preform of the Avestan particle remains unclear: *bā* could be the outcome of an instrumental **b^heh₁* or **b^hoh₁*, a neuter plural **b^heh₂* or **b^hoh₂*, or endingless **b^he* or **b^ho*.

5. Another possible cognate of *bā* is the rare Greek particle φή ‘like, as’, attested in the *Iliad* (2x; in 2.144 only as a *varia lectio* next to ὡς), the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*, in Hesiod (in a fragmentary line of the *Catalogue of Women*), Callimachus and Antimachus. Its usage may be illustrated by the three clearest text examples:

Il. 14.499-500:

ὁ δὲ φή κώδειαν ἀνασχῶν
πέφραδέ τε Τρώεσσι καὶ εὐχόμενος ἔπος ἠῦδα
‘He, lifting it high like a poppy,
showed it to the Trojans and spoke braggingly’

HymHerm. 240-241:

ἐν δ’ ὀλίγῳ συνέλασσε κάρη χειρᾶς τε πόδας τε
φή ῥα νεόλλουτος προκαλούμενος ἦδυμον ὕπνον (Merkelbach-West 1967: 99ff.)
‘Swiftly he drew up his head and hands and feet,
lying like a newly-washed baby inviting sweet sleep’

Call., Hecale 74, 15-17:

εὔτε κόραξ ...
κυάνεον φή πίσσαν ἐπὶ πτερὸν οὐλοὸν ἔξει (Hollis 1990: 98, 250f.)
‘when the raven ... will put on a sad plumage, black as pitch’

Thus, φή directly precedes the comparandum (once with intervening ῥα), but does not influence its case form. The use for introducing a comparison can easily be explained on the basis of the specifying or identifying usage seen in Hittite *-pat*, and also matches the cataphoric function of Avestan *bā*. I therefore agree with the major etymological dictionaries of Greek (Boisacq, Frisk, Chantraine), which derive φή from PIE **b^he/o*, as a nom.acc.pl.n. **b^heh₂* (Frisk) or an ins.sg. **b^heh₁* (Chantraine). In view of δῆ ‘indeed’ (beside δέ), an ins.sg. **b^heh₁* or a variant with lengthened vowel **b^hē* seem most likely.

Alternatively, φή has been explained as a reflex of a PIE imperative **b^heh₂* ‘say!’ belonging to the athematic present φῆμι ‘to say’. The development of imperative ‘say’ into a pragmatic marker meaning ‘take, for instance’ finds a parallel in Dutch *zeg (maar)* ‘for example, more or less’ and English *say (If there are, say, three people on each corner ...)*. While this etymology is possible on paper, I find no syntactic trace of an original imperative in the usage of φή. Ruijgh (1982: 205) mentions as an argument in favour of an original imperative the oxytonesis of φή, which could be interpreted as a retention of the original accentuation which escaped the analogical change to φῆ observed in the verb. But, obviously, the acute accentuation is not an argument against a different etymology.

In theory, YAv. *bā* could also represent PIE *b^heh₂ ‘say!’ Yet in Indo-Iranian, the root present *b^heh₂- is only attested in the meaning ‘to shine’, which renders an explanation of *bā* as ‘say!’ difficult: one would have to assume that the novel meaning ‘to say’ was retained only in a petrified form in the particle, while the earlier meaning ‘to shine’ prevailed in the verb. This would be the opposite of the expected development. Pirart in Kellens-Pirart 1988-91 II: 170 suggests that *bā* might continue a PIE neuter root noun *b^heh₂ ‘which shines’ used adverbially. This is formally possible, and it would remove the need to pass by a meaning ‘to say’. But a neuter root noun to a root in *-H would be unique. There is also a semantic drawback to this explanation. A derivative of a word meaning ‘appear(ance)’ is often used to tone down the absoluteness of a communication: *He, apparently/it seems, is the leader of the gang.* Yet in the usage of YAv. *bā* I find no such connotation, on the contrary: Ahura Mazda gives straight and clear answers. Thus, I stick to the derivation from PIE *b^ho/e.

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